

St. Anne's Gymnasium
(Club Marquette)
74 Cumberland Street
Woonsocket
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-374

HABS

RI

4-7100N.

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

ST. ANNE'S GYMNASIUM (CLUB MARQUETTE)

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Location: 74 Cumberland Street, Woonsocket, Providence, Rhode Island.

Present Owner: Club Marquette, 74 Cumberland Street, Woonsocket, Rhode Island (1978).

Present Occupant: Vacant.

Present Use: Vacant, to be demolished by the Redevelopment Agency of Woonsocket in order to widen Cumberland Avenue into four lanes.

Significance: St. Anne's Gymnasium, built in 1894, was designed by F. Walter Fontaine, one of the leading architects of the community. The building has served as a cultural, social and athletic center for the French-Canadian community of Woonsocket.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

St. Anne's Gymnasium, built in 1894, was designed by F. Walter Fontaine, one of Woonsocket's leading architects. Fontaine was the head of the firm W. F. Fontaine & Sons. Other buildings in Woonsocket designed by Fontaine include the Police Station (1904), the First Methodist Church (1909), and the Y.M.C.A. (1909). The building served as a cultural, social and athletic center for the French-Canadian community between its opening and 1942. Until 1937 French plays were performed in the building's theater. Many of these were written by Woonsocket residents such as Victor Vekeman and Dr. Joseph Hills. In the late 1920s the Sentinellist Movement, which included an effort by French-Canadian Catholics to preserve the ethnic character of their churches and schools, held important meetings in the gymnasium. St. Anne's Gymnasium also served as temporary headquarters for St. Louis parish. In 1942, the building was purchased by the Club Marquette, its present owners (1978). During the period of ownership by the Club, the Marquette Credit Union began with offices in the building. The Club is a fraternal organization interested in the survival of French language and culture in the Woonsocket region.

Prepared by Department of Planning
and Development
Woonsocket, Rhode Island
1978

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

The rectangular (three-bay front) building is of brick with a light brick and stone trim. It is two-and-a-half stories with a projecting one-bay tower on the south corner. There is a hip roof on the main block of the building with gable and shed dormers. There are rafter ends at the eaves with a molding below. Behind the tower on the southeast elevation is an interior chimney with a corbelled cap and insets. All openings on the building are semi-circular arches with surrounds of the lighter brick. The second floor openings are either single or double windows with transoms and have lintels of quarry-faced stone. The surrounds on this floor have corbelled ends. There is a water table around the building composed of the lighter colored brick.

The interior of the building originally consisted of a gymnasium and bowling alley in the first story. The second story held a theater with a sloping floor, fixed seating with seating boxes, an orchestra pit and a balcony. There also was a small library near the building entrance. The interior floor plans have been extensively altered. The main decorative feature of the building is the dome over the second floor theater ornamented with painted motifs and pierced wooden panels.

The building has been extensively altered since 1942. The interior of the building has been dramatically and totally changed from its original state. The first story, originally the gymnasium and bowling alley, has been divided into two floors. The second floor theater has been replaced by a flat-floored function room with a bar at one end and a modified stage at the other end. The balcony has been altered and converted into restrooms, while the small library is no longer in existence. On the exterior the following alterations have occurred: most of the original tower has been removed and given a new roof; the large windows have been reduced in size and changed in shape; and the main entrance has been removed from the front to the side. The entire building has been renovated since 1950 using plywood paneling, drop ceilings, and other "modern" materials.

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PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Redevelopment Agency of Woonsocket with funding from the United States Department of Housing and Urban

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Development in compliance with Executive Order 11593 and a Memorandum of Agreement with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation as a mitigative effort in the widening of Cumberland Avenue into four lanes. John A. Burns, AIA, was the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) project coordinator. The historical and architectural written data was written by the Department of Planning and Development of Woonsocket. The data was edited and in some cases expanded in February 1979 by Mary Beth Betts in the HABS office. Photographs were taken by George Beaubien, Jr., assisted by Frank Giuliano in August, 1978.